

## Feelings

### Can You Recognize Your Feelings?

Sometimes people don't allow themselves to have certain emotions (for example, you tell yourself, "Feeling angry is not all right"). Sometimes people aren't honest with themselves about their emotions (for example, saying, "I'm just having a bad day," when the truth is they're sad). When you mislabel emotions or deny them, you cannot address them and they build up inside you.

### Are You Aware of Physical Signs of Certain Feelings?

Maybe you get an upset stomach when you are anxious, bite your fingernails when you are stressed, or shake when you are angry. Think about the emotions that trouble you, and try to identify how they show physically.

### How Do You Cope With Your Feelings Now?

How do you respond when you experience negative emotions? How do your feelings affect you and others around you? For instance, do your feelings interfere with your relationships with others? Do people avoid you, try to keep you from getting upset, or try to make you feel better? Focus on one or two emotions you need to cope with better.

### How Do You Express Your Emotions?

It is important to find an appropriate way to express emotions. You can express feelings indirectly (to a trusted group, friend, or counselor), or you can express feelings directly to others about whom you have the feelings. You need to learn in which situations it is appropriate to express feelings directly. You also can change your thinking in ways that result in your feeling different. For example, instead of saying, "I am so angry she doesn't agree with me, I feel like using," you can frame your feelings as, "It's all right for someone not to agree with me, and using will not make anything better."

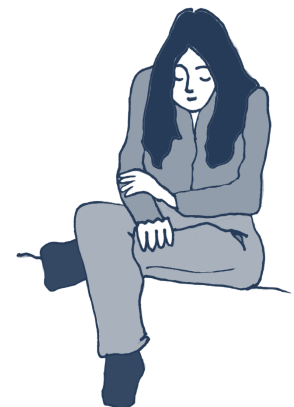
Do not let out-of-control feelings drive you back to using. Learning to cope with emotions means allowing yourself to feel and balancing an honest response with intelligent behavior.

## Depression

Although we know drug use and depression are related, it is not always clear how the two interact. Most people in recovery report having problems with depression from time to time. Depression can be a particular problem for people who have been using stimulants. Stimulants make people feel “high” by flooding the brain with chemicals called neurotransmitters that regulate feelings of pleasure. During recovery there are periods when the brain doesn’t supply enough of those neurotransmitters. The undersupply of neurotransmitters causes a temporary feeling of depression. But this is different from being clinically depressed. For some people, depression left untreated can result in relapse. It is important to be aware of signs of depression and be prepared to cope with the feelings. If you feel that you cannot cope with your depression or if your depression lasts for a long time, seek help from a mental health professional. Your counselor or someone else at your treatment program can refer you to someone for help.

These are some symptoms that might indicate depression. **Check all that apply to you:**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Low energy   | <input type="checkbox"/> Stopping exercise program   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Overeating or not eating                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Avoiding social activities  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sad thoughts   | <input type="checkbox"/> Feelings of boredom, irritability, or anger                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Losing interest in career or hobbies                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Crying spells   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sleeping more than usual                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Suicidal thoughts or actions  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Decreased sex drive                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Stopping normal activities such as work, cleaning house, buying groceries |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Increased thoughts of drinking                         |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Insomnia   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stopping attendance at 12-Step or mutual-help meetings |  |



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- Increase exercise.
- Plan some new activities.
- Consult a doctor; medication may help.
- Talk to a spouse.
- Talk to a friend.
- Talk to a counselor.

A cartoon illustration of a woman with short, straight grey hair and bangs. She is wearing a grey long-sleeved sweater over a white collared shirt. She is standing with her hands on her hips, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. To her left is a height measurement scale consisting of ten horizontal lines. The lines are evenly spaced, with the top line aligned with the top of her head and the bottom line aligned with the bottom of her feet. The scale is used to indicate her height.

